

**Maine Telecommunications Relay Services Advisory Council**

c/o William H. Nye, Chair

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August 21, 2002

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: Telecommunication Relay Service  
Annual Log of Consumer Complaints  
CC Docket No. 98-67

Dear Ms. Dortch:

We are writing to forward all the documents in our possession that contain records of consumer complaints (or comments) received between June 1, 2001, and May 31, 2002, about the operation of the Maine Relay Service. We enclose the following documents:

- a) Annual Consumer Complaints Summary, June 2001 - May 2002  
(compiled by AT&T)
- b) List of Complaints received by Maine Center for Deafness (compiled by  
Julia Bell, Outreach Manager at MCD)
- c) Letter Indicating no Complaints Received by Public Utilities Commission  
(written by Derek Davidson, Director, Consumer Assistance Division)
- d) Customer Survey Results and Recommendations (compiled by the  
Evaluation Committee of the Advisory Council to the Maine Relay  
Service).

As you know, Maine presently does not have a single official who is responsible for the management of the Maine Relay Service. Instead, as established by statute, the Telecommunications Relay Services Advisory Council is required to evaluate the Maine Relay Service and to provide advice and recommendations to the State's relay service provider. (See

35-A M.R.S.A. § 8704 (a copy of which is also enclosed)). The Advisory Council has been using a bi-annual survey as a tool to evaluate the operation of the Relay Service, to identify any problems, and to make needed improvements. As noted above, I enclose the most recent survey and the resulting recommendations adopted by the Advisory Council.

On a day-to-day basis, if a user of the Maine Relay Service has a complaint, he or she is encouraged to submit the complaint to the Consumer Assistance Division (CAD) at the Maine Public Utilities Commission -- the division that takes in all complaints about utility operation. When a complaint is filed at the PUC, the CAD contacts the utility involved and works to resolve the problem. In the past fourteen months the Consumer Assistance Division has received no complaints about the Maine Relay Service. Perhaps relay users have not understood where to direct their complaints. Some customers do make complaints to the staff of the Maine Center of Deafness (MCD), where Julia Bell serves as Outreach Manager for the Maine Relay Service. [Under a contract with AT&T, Maine's relay provider, MCD provides outreach services for the Relay Service.]

After talking with Joel Shifman of the Maine PUC staff, and after talking among ourselves, we have agreed that in order to have a more formalized list of complaints in the future, we will ask the Maine Center on Deafness to record all complaints (or comments) on the relay service in a log to be kept in the Maine Center on Deafness offices. At the end of each June - May year, a summary of the complaints received will be forwarded to the FCC, along with the list of complaints received by the State's relay provider, AT&T.

If you have any suggestions or questions about this proposal, please call or write.

Sincerely,

Committee on Evaluation  
MERS Advisory Council

*Lois Morin*

Lois Morin, Chair

E-mail: [ptsvrilois@awi.net](mailto:ptsvrilois@awi.net)

William C. Black, Esq., Member

E-mail: [william.c.black@state.me.us](mailto:william.c.black@state.me.us)

Enclosures

cc: Erica Meyers, FCC  
Joel Shifman, PUC (w/o enclosures)  
William Nye, Chair, Advisory Council (w/o enclosures)  
Julia Bell, MCD (w/o enclosures)

**MAINE RELAY SERVICE  
ANNUAL CONSUMER COMPLAINTS SUMMARY  
JUNE 2001 – MAY 2002**

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**June 2001**

**TTY June 13, 2001**

The customer complained the CA had not relayed the call verbatim.

**Escalation:** Received by the National Relay Center, PA and handled by the same.

**Resolution:** Apologized and assured the customer the complaint would be documented.

**Contact Closed:** June 13, 2001

**FCC:** Verbatim

**TTY June 15, 2001**

The customer complained the CA had not relayed the call verbatim.

**Escalation:** Received by the National Relay Center, PA and handled by the same.

**Resolution:** Apologized for the inconvenience, and assured the customer the CA's manager would follow up accordingly.

**Contact Closed:** June 15, 2001

**FCC:** Verbatim

**July 2001** – Nothing to report

**August 2001** – Nothing to report

**September 2001** – Nothing to report

**October 2001**

**Voice October 20, 2001**

The customer complained the CA was not transparent during a 911 call.

**Escalation:** Received by the Relay Customer Service Line and handled by the National Customer Care Center.

**Resolution:** Apologized and explained CAs are to type verbatim what they hear. Explained the CA's manager would follow up with the CA.

**Contact Closed:** October 20, 2001

**FCC:** Transparency

**November 2001** – Nothing to report

**December 2001** – Nothing to report

**January 2002**

**Voice January 17, 2002**

The caller reported a complaint she had from a TTY user. He/she reported problems reaching relay when dialing 711 and the 800 number.

**Escalation:** Received by the Relay Customer Service Line and handled by the National Customer Care Center.

**Resolution:** Tested the numbers for Maine relay and did not find any problem. Requested more information from the TTY user to investigate.

**MAINE RELAY SERVICE  
ANNUAL CONSUMER COMPLAINTS SUMMARY  
JUNE 2001 – MAY 2002**

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**Contact Closed:** January 17, 2002  
**FCC:** Answer Performance

**February 2002** – Nothing to report

**March 2002** – Nothing to report

**April 2002**

**Voice April 4, 2002**

The customer complained she heard the CA discussing her phone conversation with others.

**Escalation:** Received by the National Relay Center, PA and handled by the National Customer Care Center.

**Resolution:** Apologized for the inconvenience, and assured the customer the CA's manager would follow up accordingly.

**Contact Closed:** April 4, 2002

**FCC:** Confidentiality

**May 2002** – Nothing to report

## **Black, William C**

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**From:** Julia Bell [mcdmers@maine.rr.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 12, 2002 2:39 PM  
**To:** 'Black, William C'; 'Shifman, Joel'  
**Cc:** 'Lois G. Morin (E-mail)'; 'William Nye (home) (E-mail)'; 'Johnson, Alice C.'  
**Subject:** RE: Any Complaints about MERS? (2001-2002)

I looked back at my earlier email on this subject and realized I had not provided further information related to actual numbers.

In fact, we had no complaints about the relay service itself during the time period specified that had adequate information to report as an individual incident. I have record of the following:

10/4/01 - complaint from deaf person in Solon, Maine that relay service is not leaving messages on voice mail. In one instance, he reports he called the diabetes educator at the hospital in his area; when she was not in, he asked CA to leave message on her voice mail. Educator later told him she received no message. Also reported that several of his customers claimed to have requested that messages be left by CA when they called him via relay regarding his housepainting work. He did not receive any messages. Deaf person was unable to provide exact dates or times for any of these incidents.

11/20/01 -- call from Medical Call Center regarding repeated messages to "call again later" when trying to use the 1-800 relay access number (for voice callers).

12/18/01 -- deaf person called another private number via relay at 9 a.m. Line was busy, so CA tried call again. After second try, CA refused to continue trying. Deaf person indicated he called back about 30 minutes later, and different CA was willing to continue trying number until call went through.

12/19/01 - complaint initially from deaf woman regarding business owner unwilling to take relay call. I followed up with businessman, who explained that he is a sole proprietor and asked that the caller try again in five minutes because he was with a customer. He said he asks the same of hearing callers. At this point, according to hearing business owner, the CA became very rude and belligerent, and accused him of refusing to do business with deaf people. When I called deaf woman back to explain what had happened, she was very happy to know it was not business owner refusing to take her call. Neither caller or business owner had CA identifier to be able to file a complaint regarding that A's behavior.

January, '02 - deaf man indicated he had tried to call a private party who was selling a used snowmobile. The CA indicated that the private party refused to take the call. Deaf man wants CA's to do better job of explaining what the relay service is so people will not hang up.

I don't know if you even want to count those, Joel, since they are not specific enough to identify all the who, what, why, etc. But I have listed them off, just in case. Other than that, we have a very limited number of negative comments about the relay service in the survey results from last fall, if you want to include them in any narrative you provide with your report to the FCC.

Most of our calls about the relay service are related to businesses/medical offices/etc. refusing to take a relay call. In each of those cases, I follow up with the offending party. The other type of all this past year has been about 711 not working - all of those problems have been "in-state" problems, and mostly related to specific

phone systems not being programmed correctly.

Let me know if you need additional information from me.

Julia Bell

Manager, Public Relations and Administration

Maine Center on Deafness -- providing information,  
empowerment, advocacy and referral services throughout Maine.



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COMMISSIONERS

August 20, 2002

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> St., SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

RE: Telecommunications Relay Service  
Annual Log of Consumer Complaints  
CC Docket No. 98-67

Dear Ms. Dortch:

As the person in charge of the Consumer Assistance Division at the Maine Public Utilities Commission, I am writing to say that for the period between June, 2001 and May, 2002, the Maine Public Utilities Commission (and its Consumer Assistance Division) received no complaints from customers about either the Maine Relay Service or TTY calls.

If anyone at the FCC has questions about our role or our recordkeeping, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Derek Davidson



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